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OO RUEHDBU RUEHIK RUEHPW RUEHYG
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O 200512Z MAY 07
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8188
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASH DC PRIORITY
RUEHC/DEPT OF LABOR WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/HOMELAND SECURITY CENTER WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY 0030
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 4079

UNCLAS KABUL 001685

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DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/FO DAS GASTRIGHT, SCA/A
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR AID/ANE, AID/DCHA/DG
NSC FOR HARRIMAN
OSD FOR SHIVERS
CENTCOM FOR CG CFC-A, CG CJTF-76 POLAD

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MINISTER OF HAJJ AND ENDOWMENT FRIENDLY TO
COALITION PRESENCE

REF: KABUL 1478

¶1. On May 19, Ambassador paid a courtesy visit to Minister of Hajj and Endowment (sometimes referred to as Minister of Hajj and Islamic Affairs) Nehmatullah Shahrani. Minister Shahrani, who dictates and distributes themes for Friday sermons to those mosques and religious leaders officially registered with the Ministry (a minority of all Afghan mosques), is a moderate. A former student of comparative law at George Washington University, he indicated friendliness toward the foreign military presence, support for counternarcotics efforts, and an anti-Taliban sentiment.

¶2. Ambassador and Minister Shahrani discussed the recent incident in Jalalabad in which a young Afghan woman seriously injured during a coalition operation against the Taliban was transported without a male relative or local elder by Coalition forces for medical treatment at Bagram (Ref). Local elders were infuriated by this action and deemed it contrary both to Islam and to Afghan customs. Given that the woman's life was in danger, Minister Shahrani said her transport was not inconsistent with the principles of Islam. He said only local tradition and interpretation created the tension and public outcry. He told the Ambassador that he is doing all he can to calm and educate people regarding the issue. In addition, Ambassador and Minister Shahrani discussed the Islamic themes that might have resonance in the counternarcotics campaign in Afghanistan.

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